United Nations S/2018/946

Security Council

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Letter dated 22 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 2423 (2018), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2019 and requested the conclusion of a Pact for Peace between the Government of Mali and the United Nations, with the support of the members of the international mediation, to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

The Pact for Peace was signed on 15 October 2018 by Lassine Bouaré, Minister for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation, and Annadif Mahamat Saleh, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, during a meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, in Bamako. On the same day, the armed groups signatories to the Agreement, namely the Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin d'Alger and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, issued a joint declaration reaffirming their commitment to the implementation of the Agreement and stating their full adherence to the Pact for Peace (see S/2018/931, annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fifty-sixth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015), paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016), paragraph 6 of resolution 2393 (2017) and paragraph 12 of resolution 2401 (2018), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on data available to agencies of the United Nations system and obtained from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other relevant sources. Data from agencies of the United Nations system on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for September 2018.

II. Major developments

Box 1

Key points: September 2018

1. A significant intensification of military activity, including air strikes and artillery shelling, took place in parts of Idlib and surrounding areas during the first half of September. Civilians were reportedly killed and injured in areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups and in areas controlled by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. Several hospitals and schools were hit by air strikes during this period.

2. On 17 September, the Presidents of Turkey and the Russian Federation announced plans to establish a demilitarized zone in the so-called Idlib de-escalation area. The agreement stipulated that heavy weapons and "radical terrorist groups" would be withdrawn from the zone by 10 and 15 October, respectively. The announcement was followed by a marked reduction in military activity in the area, and the suspension of air strikes. Civilians across Idlib and surrounding areas

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continued to face a range of protection threats, and massive humanitarian needs persisted.

3. The reporting period saw further deterioration of the humanitarian situation of some 45,000 people estimated to be in the Rukban camp, on the Syrian-Jordanian border. Sources inside the camp reported that three people, including two children, died during this period for lack of access to medical care. Reports were also received of a significant reduction in the availability of food and water in the camp. Because the provision of basic humanitarian assistance in the camp is increasingly urgent, efforts to deploy an inter-agency humanitarian convoy to the area continued.

4. In eastern Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, military operations against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Hajin enclave continued to severely affect civilians. The number of people estimated to have been displaced in the wider area since June reached 27,000. Humanitarian access to many of the makeshift sites hosting newly displaced people remained challenging because of insecurity, but efforts to scale up humanitarian assistance continued. An estimated 15,000 people, the majority civilians, remained in ISIL-controlled areas, exposed to ongoing hostilities.

5. United Nations humanitarian agencies and their partners continued to reach millions of people in need. From inside the country, the United Nations reached more than 3.05 million people with food assistance. No inter-agency humanitarian convoys were deployed in September and the bimonthly inter-agency convoy plan for September and October was not approved by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. However, United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners continued to reach people across the country through regular programming, including in several locations under Government control categorized as hard to reach. Cross-border assistance also remained an indispensable part of the response, and food assistance was delivered to more than 620,000 people from Turkey during September.

3. Since 24 February 2018, when the Security Council adopted resolution 2401 (2018), demanding a cessation of hostilities, military conflict has continued in many parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. During the month of September, there was a reduced level of hostilities in a number of areas, but air strikes, artillery shelling or ground fighting were reported in the Governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Hama and Dayr al-Zawr.

4. During the first half of September, there was a significant intensification of military operations in the Idlib de-escalation area. From 4 to 12 September, air strikes and ground-based attacks reportedly killed and injured civilians in areas controlled by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and in areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups. Three health facilities, one of which had been deconflicted through agreed procedures, were allegedly hit by air strikes during this period. Three schools were reportedly damaged by air strikes or shelling, resulting in the suspension of educational activities in several locations across Idlib and Hama Governorates. Reports were received that between 17,350 and 27,500 people had been newly displaced in the Idlib de-escalation area.

5. On 17 September, the Russian Federation and Turkey agreed to establish a demilitarized zone inside the Idlib de-escalation area. The agreement stipulated that the demilitarized zone would be situated up to 20 km inside the Idlib de-escalation area, and that heavy weapons and "radical terrorist groups" would be withdrawn from the zone by 10 and 15 October, respectively.

6. After the announcement of the agreement, military activities dramatically decreased in the Idlib de-escalation area, and a cessation of air strikes was also observed. However, reports continued to be received of kidnappings, improvised explosive device attacks and other threats to civilians. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners continued to pre-position aid in preparation for the possible resumption of large-scale hostilities in the Idlib area and related mass displacement.

7. The reporting period saw further deterioration of the humanitarian situation of some 45,000 people estimated to be in the Rukban camp, on the Syrian-Jordanian border. Sources inside the camp reported that three people, including two children, died during this period because of lack of access to medical care. Reports were also received of a significant reduction in the availability of food and water in the camp, understood to be linked, in part, to military operations affecting road access to the area. In view of the fact that the last significant delivery of United Nations aid to Rukban was made in January 2018, discussions with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other interlocutors on an inter-agency humanitarian convoy to the area continued.

8. In eastern Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, military operations against ISIL in the Hajin enclave continued to affect civilians, the total number of people estimated to have been displaced in the wider area since June 2018 reaching 27,000. Humanitarian access to many of the makeshift camps hosting the displaced people remained challenging, but efforts to scale up assistance, including food and hygiene items, continued during the reporting period. It was estimated that 15,000 people, including a majority of civilians and ISIL fighters, remained in ISIL-controlled areas, and scores of civilians were reportedly killed and injured as a result of air strikes or having been caught up in ground fighting. Significant restrictions on civilians' freedom of movement in the area remained in place, and movement was also impeded by the intensity of the fighting in some areas.

9. In eastern Ghutah, levels of humanitarian need remained high, while the United Nations continued to face significant access constraints, hindering its efforts to scale up assistance in the area. The United Nations continued to provide food assistance, household items, trucked water and hygiene supplies and other aid through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and other local humanitarian partners. Significant gaps were reported in relation to health services, as there were only two hospitals operational in the area, limited numbers of doctors, and insufficient coverage through mobile clinics. Restrictions around commercial activities were reported to have resulted in high prices for some key commodities. The public transportation system was reported to have been reactivated.

10. In the south-west of the country, internally displaced people returning to Dar'a city reported high levels of destruction, in particular in areas previously held by non-State armed opposition groups. Extensive damage was also reported in western rural Dar'a Governorate, where returnees' efforts to begin rehabilitating were further complicated by high prices for building materials. Access for United Nations personnel to the south-west remained very limited. Assistance continued to be provided through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, technical line ministries and local humanitarian partners.

11. Some 152,000 civilians have returned to Raqqah city since the end of hostilities in October 2017 despite high levels of explosive hazard contamination. Humanitarian assistance in the city has continued to be scaled up, through international and Syrian non-governmental organizations.

12. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria met on several occasions with the Astana guarantors (the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey) and members of the Small Group (Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi

Arabia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America); at those meetings he reiterated the United Nations responsibility in facilitating the constitutional committee and rules of procedure, as well as other matters of substance that are contained in resolution 2254 (2015), and the 12 principles developed in the United Nations-led Geneva process and endorsed in Sochi. On 10 and 11 September, the Special Envoy convened the Astana guarantors in Geneva with a view to moving the political process forward.

Protection

13. Despite a relative decrease in the intensity of violence, civilians across the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be severely affected by the direct and indirect consequences of hostilities. Air and ground-based strikes continued to kill and injure civilians and damage and destroy civilian infrastructure. The many civilian casualties and the scale of the destruction of civilian infrastructure remained a strong indication that violations of the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution and, in particular, of the prohibition on the launching of indiscriminate attacks were continuing.

14. Explosive weapons continued to be fired into populated areas, killing and injuring civilians and destroying and damaging vital infrastructure. Explosive hazard contamination in populated areas killed and injured civilians and impeded humanitarian access. The use of improvised explosive devices in some areas added to the complexity of the explosive hazard threat and continued to hinder the work of humanitarian actors.

15. In Idlib Governorate and surrounding areas in Hama and Aleppo Governorates, incidents of military bombardment by Government forces and their allies over the first half of the reporting period seriously affected civilians and their well-being, prior to the Russian-Turkish agreement reached on 17 September to establish a demilitarized zone in and around Idlib Governorate.

16. Infighting between various non-State armed opposition groups in areas in the north-west of the country continued to have an impact on civilians, owing primarily to the use of improvised explosive devices in close proximity to civilians and civilian objects. Lawlessness and criminality that included threats, intimidation, kidnapping and killing continued to be reported in Idlib Governorate and other areas in the north-west. In areas of Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, civilian casualties were also reported as a result of the fighting, improvised explosive devices and explosive hazards.

17. The United Nations received reports of multiple air strikes hitting health facilities during the reporting period. On 6 September, Magharah Hospital in Kafr Zayta subdistrict, in Hama Governorate, which is supported by a non-governmental organization (NGO), was hit by an air strike resulting in major structural and equipment damage. Initial reports showed no casualties. The hospital was reportedly rendered out of service by the attack. Each month, it had been providing an average of 780 consultations, 50 admissions, 15 major surgeries and treatment of 200 trauma cases.

18. On 8 September 2018, another NGO-supported specialized hospital in Kafr Zayta was hit by an air strike which resulted in damage to the structure and medical equipment. Three ambulances were seriously damaged. Initial reports showed no casualties. The hospital was reportedly rendered temporarily out of service. Monthly, the hospital had been providing an average of 1,590 consultations, 113 major surgeries and 230 minor surgeries. The attack was the second in two days on hospitals in Kafr Zayta.

19. On 8 September 2018, the NGO-supported Nabdh al-Hayat hospital in Has village, in Kafr Nubl subdistrict, in Idlib Governorate, was hit by barrel bombs, resulting in damage to infrastructure and medical equipment. Initial reports indicated that two health staff and two civilians were injured. The hospital was reportedly rendered temporarily out of service. Each month, the hospital had been providing an average of 4,000 consultations, 200 admissions, 215 major surgeries and treatment of 1,200 trauma cases. Credible reports were also received of the Lataminah Hospital in Lataminah city, in northern Hama Governorate, being rendered out of service as a result of heavy aerial bombardment in the vicinity of the hospital on 9 September.

20. Several verified reports were also received by the United Nations of attacks on schools during the reporting period. Air strikes on the Jisr al-Shughur area early in September resulted in significant damage to several schools, leading to the announcement of the suspension of educational activities in the area on 5 September. On 10 September, in Ma'arrah district, in Idlib Governorate, two adjacent schools — Nidhal secondary school and Quds primary school — were affected by a rocket that released several cluster bombs which fell on both schools, causing damage to windows, doors and walls, and injuring five students. The incident occurred at around 8.30 a.m., when the students were inside their classrooms. The five injured boys were hospitalized and both schools were closed for three days.

21. During the reporting period, civilians across the country continued to be subjected to killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, deprivation of liberty, abduction, torture, and inhumane, cruel and degrading treatment.

22. In areas retaken by Government forces and their allies in Rif Dimashq and northern rural Homs Governorates, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received reports of the detention by Government security forces of civilians who had remained in the Governorates and supposedly reconciled with the Government following the takeover of the area in April and May 2018 by Government forces and their allies.

23. In areas under the control of non-State armed opposition groups, OHCHR continued to document incidents of violations of international humanitarian law as well as human rights violations and abuses committed by those groups against civilians. Tens of men including activists, health service providers, journalists, and religious figures have reportedly been targeted by non-State armed opposition groups, including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (Levant Liberation Organization), in Idlib Governorate. Other victims were allegedly murdered after being accused by the armed groups of providing information to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic or merely because they had been critical of the behaviour and actions of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham. In one incident, a civilian man was publicly shot and killed by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Tallmannis village in the Ma'arrat al-Nu'man area in southern rural Idlib Governorate on 20 September. The civilian had been taken and held by the group early in August and had reportedly been accused of promoting reconciliation with the Government. Tens of men have been kidnapped by non-State armed opposition groups since August, either for ransom or reportedly because the individuals targeted had been accused of promoting reconciliation with the Government. Their whereabouts remain unknown. ISIL continued to hold hostage civilians, including women and children, abducted from Shubayki village and surrounding areas of Suwayda' Governorate on 25 July.

Humanitarian access

Box 2
Key points

1. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need, including from within the Syrian Arab Republic. Humanitarian assistance provided from within the Syrian Arab Republic by United Nations agencies based in the country to regularly accessible locations in Government-controlled areas reached more than 2.46 million people with food assistance.

2. Although 1.5 million people remain in hard-to-reach areas, no inter-agency convoys have been approved since 16 August, and the September–October convoy plan was not approved by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period. The Syrian authorities have expressed a wish to see a change in the focus of the inter-agency convoy plan, to allow locations that have recently come under the control of the Government to be targeted through regular programmes. The United Nations is currently ensuring that those locations are included in monthly regular programme requests, while maintaining that some hard-to-reach locations should continue to be targeted through the inter-agency convoy modality.

3. Cross-border assistance, authorized under Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2393 (2017), remained a vital part of the humanitarian response. In September, 348 trucks (13 consignments) delivered life-saving assistance to more than 968,000 people through cross-border deliveries. United Nations humanitarian cross-border operations through Jordan remained suspended in September.

24. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners reached millions of people in need, including women and children, through all available access routes, including (a) humanitarian operations from within the Syrian Arab Republic, whereby humanitarian deliveries reach those in need without crossing conflict lines; (b) cross-line convoys, whereby assistance from within the country is delivered across conflict lines; and (c) cross-border deliveries, whereby assistance is provided to those in need from neighbouring countries (see table 2). In addition to the United Nations and its partners, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and non-governmental organizations continued to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need. Local authorities in many areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups also continued to provide services where possible.

25. As at the end of September the Syrian authorities had not yet responded to the proposed United Nations inter-agency convoy plan for September and October and no inter-agency convoys were deployed during the reporting period. The authorities have, however, stated a wish to see a change in the focus of the inter-agency convoy plan, to allow locations that have recently come under the control of the Government to be targeted through regular programmes. The United Nations is currently ensuring that those locations are included in monthly regular programme requests, while maintaining that some hard-to-reach locations should continue to be targeted through the inter-agency convoy modality.

26. Individual agencies continued to submit requests for single-agency deliveries to locations across the country. Such deliveries are undertaken by United Nations agencies based in Damascus to regularly accessible areas. In September, all 1,898 official requests submitted by the World Food Programme to the Syrian authorities to obtain facilitation letters for the transport of food assistance to locations across the

country were approved. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted 52 requests for facilitation letters for the movement of core relief items and livelihood kits, all of which were approved. UNHCR reached more than 2.7 million people with multisectoral support. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reached 528,000 children and mothers with primary health-care and immunization services. In addition, an estimated 64,100 children and pregnant and lactating women were provided with complementary feeding and micronutrient supplementation. Some 13,500 children benefited from education supplies and services, school rehabilitation and textbooks, and 6,400 children benefited from protection and psychosocial support services. Around 275,000 people were reached with reproductive health and gender-based violence services supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and its partners. Approximately 3.05 million people received food assistance and more than 1.2 million people benefited from water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies.

Table 1
People reached by the United Nations and other organizations through all modalities, September 2018

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	24 000
International Organization for Migration	25 000
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	2 766 000
United Nations Children's Fund	2 000 000
United Nations Development Programme	1 038 751
United Nations Population Fund	278 745
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	195 000
World Food Programme	3 035 080
World Health Organization	1 293 000

27. Cross-border deliveries continued under the terms of Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017) (see figure and table 2). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including its contents, its destination and the number of beneficiaries expected to be reached.

28. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations as authorized under resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2393 (2017). During the reporting period, the Mechanism monitored the delivery of 13 consignments by seven United Nations agencies, consisting of 348 trucks, from three border crossings: six from Bab al-Hawa (287 trucks), six from Bab al-Salam (58 trucks) and one from Ya'rubiyah (3 trucks). There were no concerns or questions about the humanitarian nature of the consignments sent. The United Nations provided 48-hour notice to the Government regarding all shipments. Once in the country, United Nations partners ensured that shipments arrived at the designated warehouses. Independent third-party companies contracted by the United Nations ensured independent verification of the assistance arriving at the warehouses and monitored the distribution and/or service provision. The Mechanism continued to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Iraq, Jordan and Turkey.

29. Since cross-border operations began in July 2014, following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014), the United Nations has conducted more than 874 cross-border consignments, with more than 22,063 trucks (15,107 through Bab al-Hawa and

2,307 through Bab al-Salam from Turkey; 4,605 through Ramtha from Jordan; and 44 through Ya'rubiyah from Iraq). Those operations complement and support the aid provided by international and Syrian non-governmental organizations that provide services to millions more from neighbouring countries.

30. During the reporting period, humanitarian cross-border operations through Jordan remained suspended. However, the World Food Programme and its implementing partners delivered food assistance to more than 590,000 people from the two authorized cross-border entry points with Turkey. The World Health Organization also conducted health and medical deliveries, providing nearly 1 million treatments through the cross-border mechanism. In the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF delivered winter kits, child protection assistance, nutrition, education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene supplies through a number of cross-border shipments. Primary health-care services were provided to more than 87,700 people through mobile and fixed health services. Over 20,000 children under the age of 5 as well as pregnant and lactating women were reached with micronutrient supplies. More than 22,000 children under the age of 5, as well as pregnant and lactating women, were screened for acute malnutrition; of them, 520 severely malnourished children received appropriate treatment.

31. UNHCR and its partners continued to enhance the response to the protection needs of internally displaced persons, returnees and other crisis-affected populations. By the end of August, 1,958,444 individuals were reached through protection interventions, including 793,908 individuals reached with general protection activities, 8,654 individuals reached with child protection activities, and 155,882 individuals reached through awareness-raising campaigns on prevention and response activities relating to sexual and gender-based violence in 12 governorates. As at the end of September 2018, the total number of functioning UNHCR-funded community centres and mobile units stands at 97 community centres, 15 satellite centres and 92 mobile units, supported by 2,370 outreach volunteers. This network provided protection-related services, including community mobilization, child protection, legal aid, the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, livelihood services and services for persons with specific needs, to benefit some 2.6 million internally displaced persons, returnees, members of host communities and other crisis-affected people across 12 Syrian governorates. As of September, 37,451 internally displaced persons in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Suwayda', Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Tartus, Ladhiqiyah, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr Governorates benefited from the UNHCR legal assistance programme, including some 3,000 internally displaced persons from eastern Ghutah (Rif Dimashq) and 1,100 from Afrin (Aleppo Governorate). Moreover, UNFPA reached more than 275,000 people, carrying out activities relating to reproductive health and the prevention of and response to gender-based violence and youth-related violence. Also during the reporting period, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) launched the third round of food distribution for 2018 on 30 August 2018. A total of 94,763 Palestine refugees received food parcels through the planned round of distribution; in addition, 26,377 refugees displaced from and/or affected by conflict in Yarmouk, eastern Ghutah and Dar'a received ready-to-eat food baskets during the same period. There was no cash distribution during the month of September 2018. Owing to the financial crisis faced by the Agency, the number of rounds of cash distribution has decreased to three rounds over 2018 as opposed to the six rounds planned in the UNRWA Emergency Appeal.

Number of beneficiaries assisted by the United Nations and its partners through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, by cluster, September 2018

(Thousands)

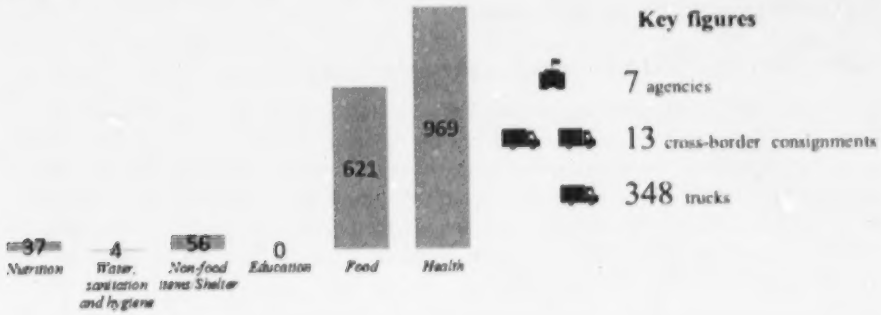

Table 2

Number of beneficiaries targeted through cross-border deliveries, by sector and by district, September 2018

Governorate	*District*	*Education*	*Food*	*Health*	*Non-food items shelter*	*Nutrition*	*Water, sanitation and hygiene*
Aleppo	Bab			5 000	6 000		
Aleppo	I'zaz		118 515	106 620	12 264		
Aleppo	Jarabulus		7 500	1 000			
Aleppo	Jabal Sim'an		16 650	89 900	9 000		
Hasakah	Qamishli			200 000			
Hama	Salamiyah			3 100			
Hama	Suqaylibiyah			13 000			
Idlib	Ma'arrahArih..		65 700	88 400			
Idlib	Harim		30 000	49 600			
Idlib			279 605	284 600	16 064	36 803	
Idlib	Idlib		85 985	122 400	12 985		4 300
Idlib	Jabal Sim'an		16 600				
Idlib	Jisr al-Shughur			3 100			
Ladhiqiyah	Haffah			2 000			

32. The Russian Federation sent informational bulletins to the United Nations from the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic, which outlined the provision of bilateral relief assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

Visas and registrations

33. A total of 96 new United Nations visa requests were submitted to the Government in September. Of those, 48 were approved, 47 remained pending as at 30 September (some were submitted late in the reporting period) and one was cancelled by the United Nations. Of the 22 previously submitted visa applications that remained pending at the beginning of the reporting period, 19 were approved in September, two remained pending and one was rejected. A total of 98 United Nations visa renewal requests were submitted in September, of which 48 were approved and 50 remained pending as at 30 September (some were submitted late in the reporting

period). Of the 36 previously submitted visa renewal requests that remained pending at the beginning of the reporting period, all were approved in September.

34. A total of 24 international non-governmental organizations are registered with the Government to operate in the country.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

35. Agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system continued to implement programmes in areas affected by frequent clashes among parties to the conflict, air strikes, the regular exchange of indirect artillery fire and asymmetrical attacks. As a result of activities relating to the armed conflict, significant populated areas became highly contaminated with unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and landmines, which pose an elevated risk to the implementation of humanitarian activities in those areas.

36. Since the beginning of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including 22 staff members of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system, 18 of whom were staff members of UNRWA; 66 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent; and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Many staff members of international and national non-governmental organizations have also reportedly been killed.

37. A total of 27 staff members of agencies and programmes of the United Nations system (1 staff member of the United Nations Development Programme and 26 UNRWA staff members) were detained or missing as at the end of the reporting period.

III. Observations

38. The agreement of 17 September between the Russian Federation and Turkey to establish a demilitarized zone in the Idlib de-escalation area has averted the immediate risk of a humanitarian catastrophe. However, the continued risk of a rapid deterioration of the situation for the 3 million people in the area remains of very serious concern. It is absolutely essential to avoid a full-scale battle in Idlib. As the demilitarization goes into effect, adherence to international humanitarian law, including protecting civilians and facilitating principled humanitarian action, will remain critical. Should civilians wish to leave the area, parties to the conflict should allow them to do so, if at all possible. The agreement reached has the potential to provide a degree of reprieve to civilians. The alternative is certain to be massive human suffering.

39. At the same time, I condemn in the strongest terms the attacks directed against civilians and the abduction and deprivation of liberty of civilians by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and non-State armed opposition groups in Idlib Governorate. Such acts are in violation of international humanitarian law.

40. Safe, rapid, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access via the most direct routes is critical to avoid a further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis. Inter-agency convoys remain an important means of ensuring that people in hard-to-reach areas receive assistance and protection, alongside regular programming. Cross-border humanitarian assistance continues to provide an indispensable lifeline for hundreds of thousands of people across the Syrian Arab Republic. The United Nations continues to operate in the north-west of the country from across the border in Turkey to reach those in need, to provide additional support for the oncoming winter, and to ensure that aid is pre-positioned in the event of an increase in hostilities. Many others are reached in the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic from Iraq with critical life-

saving items not otherwise available. The humanitarian nature of cross-border assistance continues to be verified by the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism and its deliveries are confirmed on the ground by third-party monitors. It is vital that the modalities set out under resolution 2165 (2014) and subsequent resolutions, which allow for cross-border assistance to be provided to those in need through the most direct routes, be renewed in order to ensure that those persons continue to have access to the life-saving assistance they need.

41. I remind all parties to the conflict of their obligations under international humanitarian law to respect civilians and civilian objects, including medical personnel and facilities. The parties must also take constant care to spare them in military operations, including by taking all feasible precautions to avoid damage to infrastructure dedicated to education, health care and other vital services. I recall that any use of chemical weapons is unlawful and completely unacceptable. Moreover, the parties should ensure civilians' freedom of movement to the maximum extent that they are able to do so, and must continue to protect civilians whether they choose to move or remain.

42. I also call upon all parties to the conflict, all States, civil society and the United Nations system to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, in particular by providing information and documentation. I reiterate that accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law is a requirement under international law and central to achieving sustainable peace in the Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate my call for the situation in the country to be referred to the International Criminal Court.

43. In view of serious ongoing concerns repeatedly raised by OHCHR with regard to the protection of civilians and other human rights issues in the Syrian Arab Republic, I continue to strongly urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with Human Rights Council resolutions S-18/1 and 19/22, to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights.

44. I remain hopeful that the agreement of 17 September between the Russian Federation and Turkey on Idlib will open a window of opportunity for the political process to move forward. This is a crucial moment to revive a credible and inclusive political process for the Syrian Arab Republic, starting with the establishment of a United Nations-facilitated constitutional committee in Geneva. The goal of the United Nations efforts continues to be to end the suffering of the Syrian people and find a sustainable and peaceful solution to the conflict through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. My Special Envoy, with my full support, is committed to realizing this political solution in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012.

Annex

Reported incidents affecting civilians recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, September 2018*

Rif Dimashq Governorate

- On 22 September, two women were detained by Government security forces in Irbin city in eastern Ghutah, in Rif Dimashq. The reasons for the abductions are not known.

Hama Governorate

- On 7 September, nine civilians, including five women and three children, were killed and 22 other civilians were injured as a result of what were alleged to be ground-based strikes that hit the Government-controlled city of Muhradah in north-western Hama.
- On 9 September, the Lataminah Hospital in the city of Lataminah in northern Hama reportedly went out of service as a result of heavy unidentified bombardment that struck within the vicinity of the hospital.

Aleppo Governorate

- On 1 September, an explosion with what was alleged to be a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device occurred in the vicinity of the local council building in the city of I'zaz in northern rural Aleppo. As a result, three civilians were killed and 11 others were injured.
- On 5 September, an improvised explosive device attached to a motorbike reportedly detonated in the vicinity of the Sharia school in the city of Jarabulus in northern rural Aleppo, resulting in the injuring of at least four civilians.
- On 27 September, two civilian men were captured at one of the checkpoints manned by non-State armed opposition groups in Afrin city in western rural Aleppo. The whereabouts of the two abductees and the reason for the abductions remain unknown.
- On 13 September, in the afternoon, mortar shells hit in the vicinity of Nahhas roundabout and Tali'a school in the Nile St. neighbourhood in Government-controlled Aleppo city. As a result of the attack, a 10-year-old child was killed and 13 other civilians, including five women, were injured.

Idlib Governorate

- On 1 September, two civilians (a pregnant woman and her two-year-old daughter) were killed as a result of what was alleged to be a ground-based strike

* In line with Security Council resolution 2258 (2015), the present description of incidents that are reported to have occurred during the month relates to compliance with Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Ceasefire of the International Syria Support Group. The list of incidents gives examples of human rights issues of concern raised in the report. However, owing to the changing patterns of conflict and the loss of networks of credible and/or reliable sources in many conflict-affected areas, verifying incidents is increasingly difficult. The list contains only those incidents that were reported to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and have been verified according to its methodology, and should not be considered comprehensive.

that hit a residential area in the town of Bdama in the rural Jisr al-Shughur area of western rural Idlib.

- On 2 September, one boy was killed and another boy was injured as a result of what was reported to be an improvised explosive device attached to a civilian vehicle that detonated in the village of Kafr Sajnah in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man.
- On 2 September, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) fighters abducted a local activist/journalist in the village of Kafr Ruma in southern rural Idlib. Reportedly, the activist had been critical of HTS. His whereabouts remain unknown.
- On 2 September, one woman was injured as a result of what was alleged to be a ground-based strike that hit in the vicinity of her house in Mar'and village in western rural Idlib.
- On 3 September, two civilians, including one woman, were injured as a result of what was alleged to be a roadside improvised explosive device that detonated along a highway on the outskirts of Jisr al-Shughur city, in Idlib.
- On 4 September, one civilian was injured as a result of what was reported to be an improvised explosive device that detonated in the vicinity of the Fatah Mosque in the city of Ariha in southern rural Idlib.
- On 4 September, at least 13 civilians were killed and 20 other civilians were injured as a result of air and ground-based strikes that hit the Jisr al-Shughur area, in Idlib, including the following incidents:
  - Five civilians, including four children, were killed and 12 other civilians, including six children, were injured as a result of bombardments that hit a residential area in the Basatin neighbourhood in Jisr al-Shughur.
  - Four civilians, including one woman, were killed and one civilian woman was injured in the vicinity of Jisr al-Shughur.
  - Two civilians, including one child, were injured in Janudiyah village in Jisr al-Shughur.
  - One civilian was killed and four other civilians were injured in Kafr Din village in Jisr al-Shughur.
  - One civilian was killed and another was injured in Furaykah village in Jisr al-Shughur.
  - Two civilians were killed in Muhambal village in Jisr al-Shughur.
- On 5 September, two boys were injured as a result of what were alleged to be ground-based strikes that hit the village of Hish in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man.
- On 6 September, ground-based strikes reportedly hit the town of Tah in Khan Shaykhun and resulted in the killing of one civilian man and the injury of one boy.
- On 7 September, four civilians were killed and seven others were injured as a result of an unidentified bombardment that hit the town of Habit in Khan Shaykhun. On the same day, two other civilians were injured as a result of what were alleged to be ground-based strikes that hit in the vicinity of a "White Helmets" office in Khan Shaykhun.
- On 8 September, three civilians, including one pregnant woman and one girl, were killed as a result of what were alleged to be air strikes that hit the village of Abidin in Khan Shaykhun.

- On 8 September, one civilian was killed as a result of an unidentified bombardment that hit the village of Halbah in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man.
- On 8 September, a hospital known by the name of Nabdh al-Hayat in the village of Has in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district was allegedly hit with what were reported to be air strikes. The hospital sustained significant structural damage and was put out of service.
- On 9 September, three civilians, including one woman, were injured as a result of what were alleged to be ground-based strikes that hit the village of Kafr Ayn in Khan Shaykhun.
- On 9 September, a nine-month-old boy was killed and five other civilians were injured as a result of what were alleged to be air strikes that hit the town of Habit in Khan Shaykhun. On the same day, one civilian was injured as a result of an unidentified bombardment that hit the village of Aljabin in Habit.
- On 10 September, ground-based strikes reportedly hit within the vicinity of a school complex in the village of Jarjanaz in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man. Both the Quds primary school and the Nidhal secondary school reportedly sustained minor infrastructural damage. Reports also indicated that seven civilians, including two women and three students aged from 7 to 15, were injured as a result of the strikes. On the same day, other ground-based strikes reportedly hit within the vicinity of another school in the village of Hish in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man but no reports of civilian casualties were documented.
- On 14 September, members of HTS held two religious preachers (imams) from the Ahl al-Sunna and Farouk Mosques in Atimah village in the Dana district in northern Idlib. Both preachers were reportedly accused of rejecting HTS instructions to preach at the mosque and promote donations and financial support for HTS. One of the preachers was reportedly released a few hours later — allegedly with signs of cruel treatment inflicted on his body — while the other preacher's whereabouts remain unknown.
- On 18 September, unidentified masked armed men abducted the head of a non-governmental organization in Sahyan village in the Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district in southern rural Idlib. Reportedly, the abductee was taken while at the Sahyan restaurant. The whereabouts of the abductee and the motive behind the abduction remain unknown.
- On 20 September, a civilian man was publicly executed (shot and killed) by HTS in Tallmannis village in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district, in southern rural Idlib. The victim had been held by HTS since August and reportedly accused of collaborating with and promoting reconciliation with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.
- On 22 September, a local activist was reportedly abducted by masked and armed HTS fighters from his home in Kafr Nubl city in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man. The abductee had reportedly taken part in peaceful protests organized in the area on 21 September and called for the release of all detainees held by all parties to the conflict. He had also reportedly been known for his outspoken views that were often critical of HTS, including on social media. The abductee had previously condemned the attacks of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant against civilians in Government-controlled Suwayda' on 25 July and expressed his solidarity with the civilians who had been displaced from the two Shia villages of Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib. The abductee had reportedly been strongly criticized not only by HTS but by many other activists in the community who accused him of promoting reconciliation with the Government and of being pro-Shia. The whereabouts of the abductee remain unknown.

Homs Governorate

- On 14 September, at least 11 civilians (all men) were reportedly detained by Government security forces in the Government-controlled city of Rastan in northern rural Homs. The detainees were all allegedly former members of the White Helmets who had remained and reconciled with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic since May 2018. Unconfirmed reports received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights suggested that they had been detained on charges of being involved in activities related to former alleged "chemical attacks".

Ladhiqiyah Governorate

- On 4 September, three civilians were killed and five others were injured as a result of what were alleged to be air strikes that hit the villages of Kafr Din and Furaykah in rural Ladhiqiyah.

Hasakah Governorate

- On 26 September, two civilians were killed as a result of what was reported to be a roadside improvised explosive device that detonated in the town of Markada in southern rural Hasakah.

Dayr al-Zawr Governorate

- On 26 September, two civilians were injured as a result of what was alleged to be a missile that hit the town of Dhiban in the rural Mayadin area of eastern Dayr al-Zawr.

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General Assembly
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Agenda items 35 and 41

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 19 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the records of violations of the ceasefire by the Republic of Armenia in September 2018 (see annex).*

During the reporting period, the armed forces of Armenia violated the cease fire regime 2,722 times and continued to use large-calibre guns and heavy weaponry from their positions in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and from the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

As a result, one serviceman of the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan was killed and two were wounded during the month.

The military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan does not represent a solution and will never produce a political outcome desired by Armenia. The resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35 and 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

18-17749 (E) 261018

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Annex to the letter dated 19 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia for September 2018*

Dates	*Direction (locality)*	*Weapons used*	*Number of ceasefire violations*	*Casualties and damages*
1–30 September	**Aghdam district, Azerbaijan**			
	Afatly village	AK	9	
	Ahmadali village	AK	13	
	Ahmadaghali village	AK/AKM	44	
	Ayag Garvand village	AK	15	
	Bash Garvand village	AK/AKM	26	
	Chamanly village	AK/AKM	34	
	Chiragly village	AK/AKM	28	
	Evoghlu village	AK/AKM	5	
	Garadaghli village	AK	13	
	Mahrizli village	AK/AKM	16	1 serviceman of the armed forces of Azerbaijan was killed
	Mammadbaghirly village	AK/AKM	10	
	Mirashilly village	AK	3	
	Opposite positions	AK/AKM	75	
	Orta Garvand	AK/AKM/OSV	23	
	Saryjaly village	AK/AKM	38	
	Shahvalilar village	AKM	7	
	Yuzbashily village	AK	2	
	Zangishaly village	AK/AKM	16	
	Aghjabadi district, Azerbaijan			
	Gyamaddynly village	AK/AKM	68	
	Minakhorlu village	AK/AKM	49	
	Dashkasan district, Azerbaijan			
	Tazakand village	DShK	2	
	Zivilyan village	AKM	4	
	Fizuli district, Azerbaijan			
	Alkhanli village	AK	37	
	Ashaghi Abdurrahmanli village	AK/AKM	89	
	Horadiz village	AK	48	
	Opposite positions	AK/AKM	342	
	Shukurbayli village	AK/AKM	53	

* Settlements of the Republic of Azerbaijan included in this information are under occupation by the Republic of Armenia or situated close to the fire point areas.

Dates	*Direction (locality)*	*Weapons used*	*Number of ceasefire violations*	*Casualties and damages*
	Gazakh district, Azerbaijan			
	Ashaghi Askipara village	AK/AKM/DShK	12	
	Aslanbayli village	AKM/DShK	12	
	Bala Jafarli village	AK/AKM	40	
	Dash Salahli village	AKM	1	
	Farahli village	AK/AKM/DShK	12	
	Jafarli village	AKM	8	
	Gaymagly village	AK/AKM/DShK	25	
	Gushchu Ayrim village	AK/AKM/DShK	46	
	Gyzylhajili village	AK/AKM	36	
	Kamarli village	AK/AKM/DShK	11	
	Kohna Gyshlag village	AK/AKM	3	
	Mazam village	AK/AKM	8	
	Musakoy village	AKM	5	
	Shikhli village	AKM	2	
	Gedebey district, Azerbaijan			
	Ayridara village	AKM/DShK	2	
	Daryurd village	DShK	1	
	Galakand village	AKM/DShK	19	
	Garavallar village	AKM/DShK	12	
	Goyali village	AK/AKM	5	
	Mutudara village	AK/AKM/DShK	43	
	Novoivanovka village	AK/AKM	4	
	Unnamed heights	AKM/NSV	10	
	Zamanly village	AK/AKM/DShK	21	
	Goranboy district, Azerbaijan			
	Balligaya village	AKM	2	
	Bash Gishlag village	AKM/DShK	12	
	Garachinar village	AKM	2	
	Gargujag village	AK/AKM	19	
	Gulustan village	AK/AKM/DShK	43	
	Kharkhaput village	AK/AKM/DShK	22	
	Opposite positions	AK/AKM/DShK/ 60 mm M	74	
	Tapgaragoyunlu village	AK/AKM	95	
	Unnamed heights	AK/AKM	2	
	Unnamed positions	AK/AKM	9	
	Yenikand village	AK/AKM/DShK	24	
	Yukhari Agjakand village	AK/AKM	14	
	Zeyva village	AK/AKM	23	
	Goygol district, Azerbaijan			
	Kurdalylar village	AK/AKM/DShK	34	
	Pirverdilar village	AKM	1	

Dates	*Direction (locality)*	*Weapons used*	*Number of ceasefire violations*	*Casualties and damages*
	Jabrayil district, Azerbaijan			
	Ahmadalilar village	AK	17	
	Jojug Marjanli village	AK/AKM	53	
	Lala Ilahi heights	AK/AKM	74	
	Opposite positions	AK/AKM/DShK	20	
	Khojavand district, Azerbaijan			
	Opposite positions	AK/AKM/OSV	152	1 serviceman of the armed forces of Azerbaijan was wounded
	Unnamed heights	AK	15	
	Tartar district, Azerbaijan			
	Borsunlu village	AK/AKM	34	
	Chayly village	AK/AKM	72	
	Gapanli village	AK/AKM	76	
	Gaynag village	AK/AKM	9	
	Gazyan village	AK/AKM	68	
	Girmizikand village	AK	4	
	Hasangaya village	AK/AKM	56	
	Husanli village	AK/AKM	8	
	Jamilly village	AK	3	
	Karmiravan village	AK/AKM	35	
	Opposite positions	AK/AKM	38	
	Shikharg village	AKM	2	
	Tazakand village	AK/AKM	64	
	Tovuz district, Azerbaijan			
	Aghdam village	AK/AKM/DShK	15	
	Aghbulag village	AK/AKM/DShK	17	
	Asryk Jirdakhan village	AK/AKM/DShK	20	1 serviceman of the armed forces of Azerbaijan was wounded
	Garalar village	AKM/DShK	27	
	Hajali village	AKM	2	
	Kokhanaby village	AK/AKM/DShK	39	
	Munjuglu village	AK/AKM/DShK	19	

Abbreviations: AK, Kalashnikov assault rifle; AKM, modernized Kalashnikov assault rifle; DShK, heavy machine gun; OSV, semi-automatic sniper rifle; 60-mm M, mortar.

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Advancement of women

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 23 October 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Germany, together with Spain and Namibia, has the honour to transmit a Chair's summary of the high-level meeting of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network, which was held in New York on 26 September 2018, during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly (see annex).*

More than 160 participants attended the ministerial-level event, which brought together foreign ministers, heads of regional organizations, United Nations officials, focal points of the Network and civil society representatives to discuss the theme of the event, "The Security Council and women and peace and security: fostering practical action".

The summary contains the numerous and practical recommendations for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda that were made during the meeting.

We would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 29, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Christoph **Heusgen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Neville Melvin **Gertze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Agustín **Santos**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the letter dated 23 October 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Namibia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network
Side event: 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

The Security Council and Women, Peace and Security: Fostering Practical Action
Chair's Summary

During the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network held its annual UNGA side event. The event was hosted by the Permanent Missions of Germany, Spain and Namibia to the United Nations (UN), in partnership with UN Women, on September 26, 2018 at 3pm to 5pm at the German Mission in New York. More than 160 participants attended the ministerial-level event, which brought together foreign ministers, heads of regional organizations, UN officials, focal points of the Network and civil society representatives, to discuss the theme of the event, *The Security Council and Women, Peace and Security: Fostering Practical Action*. Ten of the more than 80 members of the WPS Focal Points Network are current members of the UN Security Council, and 10 are slated to be Council members in 2019.

Welcome and introductory remarks were delivered by Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany who highlighted that women's participation is not just a matter of gender equality, but also a prerequisite for peace. In opening remarks, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of Namibia noted that while the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda has gained momentum since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and seven subsequent women, peace and security resolutions, momentum for implementation of the agenda needs to be sustained. Josep Borrell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain urged a greater responsibility for WPS commitments.

In an open discussion format moderated by Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report, attendees intervened on a number of key national and global priorities for the women, peace and security agenda, using the questions below as a guide:

- How can Focal Points strengthen follow-up on the implementation of the Security Council's normative framework on WPS?
- Which actions will Focal Points take to ensure a systematic approach to the WPS agenda, at national level?

UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, noted the need for the international community to act when international commitments are being ignored by conflict parties. Tanya Gilly-Khailany, a former Iraqi parliamentarian and co-founder of SEED Foundation in Iraqi Kurdistan, drove home the point that women's rights and status is linked to the stability, security and prosperity of nations, and that the rights of women in conflict countries are an essential part of the solution.

Interventions were made by the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein, the Secretary-General for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Secretary-General for the Union of the Mediterranean, the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, as well as senior

government officials from the European Union, Afghanistan, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, United States, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Uruguay, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Drawing attention to the upcoming 20th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 (2000) in 2020 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, speakers noted the urgency for more tangible impact of the women, peace and security agenda. They discussed progress made, emerging challenges and recommendations, including creating more awareness, taking into account the experiences of migrant and refugee women, and engaging young women in peacebuilding. Acknowledging the current *#MeToo* movement against gender-based violence, speakers also highlighted the importance of utilizing existing mechanisms within the UN Security Council for investigating and prosecuting acts of sexual and gender-based violence, increasing the number of female peacekeepers and increasing briefings by women to the Security Council on pressing matters.

Key recommendations to emerge from the discussion were as follows:

Accountability and Monitoring

- Encourage efforts by international tribunals to **take up investigations and bring charges related to sexual violence in conflict**.
- The UN Security Council should impose **sanctions more frequently on those responsible for gross human rights violations in conflicts**, to serve as a deterrent to human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. Specific designation criteria on sexual and gender-based violence can be a useful tool in that regard.
- Increase the number, quality and implementation of **national action plans** on women, peace and security, and continue the sharing of good practices among Member States.
- Strengthen the **data collection mechanism on women, peace and security** at the national level.
- Continue to foster increased **regional cooperation in the implementation of women, peace and security commitments** on gender budgeting, national action plans, mediation and crisis management.
- Support **strong funding for WPS and gender equality**, recognizing that gender equality is often first on the chopping block, and last on the priority list.
- The women, peace and security agenda should be **more integrated with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, particularly with Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies.
- Members of the Network who are members of the **UN Security Council** should work closely to ensure implementation of Network recommendations.

Prevention and Protection

- Ensure **more regular reactions of the UN Security Council** in any instance of conflict-related sexual violence and make **better use of the different instruments to help end impunity** for sexual violence.
- Explore effective ways of **integrating disarmament into the women, peace and security agenda**, particularly to address the issue of small arms and light weapons.

- Support **women human rights defenders** who take a lot of risk to implement the women, peace and security agenda, through targeted support and capacity building mechanisms.
- Strengthen **protection for refugee and migrant women** and provide inbuilt support systems for victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Support **consistent gender conflict expertise and analysis** that amplifies diverse local women's experiences, and addresses differentiated needs, power relations, and risks of women, girls, men boys, and LGBTQI people.
- **Sexual violence against men and boys** remains underreported and there is need to find comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

Participation

- Ensure continuity of the practice of having an **increased number of female briefers** address the UN Security Council.
- Support women mediator networks and increase the number of **women in mediation and preventive diplomacy**.
- Support **practical initiatives to increase the number of women in peacekeeping operations**. The Elsie Initiative, for example, provides training, research, technical and financial assistance to troop and police contributing countries.
- **Increase investment in the economic needs of women** and their rehabilitation and reintegration in the aftermath of crisis.
- Increase the **inclusion of young women** in the debate and integrate the youth, peace and security agenda.

Commitments and Announcements

A number of Network members made announcements on future actions that they will be taking in their efforts to fulfil the commitments of the women, peace and security agenda.

- Germany, current Chair of the WPS Focal Points Network, reaffirmed its commitment to the WPS agenda as **a priority issue during Germany's term on the Security Council (2019–2020)** and as **co-chair of the Security Council Informal Experts Group on WPS** in 2019.
- Namibia, Chair of the WPS Focal Points Network in 2019, will **host the 2019 annual capital meeting of the Network in Windhoek, Namibia on April 10–11**. The priority theme will be "*Women, Peace and Security: Towards full participation*" and the sub-theme, "*Mainstreaming the WPS agenda in the programmes of Regional Economic Communities.*"
- Canada and Uruguay will jointly **co-chair the WPS Focal Points Network in 2020**.
- Canada plans to appoint a Women, Peace and Security ambassador.
- Spain and Finland will launch a **"Commitment 2025" initiative** to ensure women's full participation in peace processes by 2025.
- The Union for the Mediterranean is developing a regional programme with the United Kingdom on "Enhancing the civic and social engagement of women and youth in preventing violence and extremism."

About the WPS Focal Points Network

Launched in 2016 by the Government of Spain and currently chaired by Germany, the WPS Focal Points Network is a cross-regional forum for Member States and regional organizations, which collaborates with UN agencies and civil society to share experiences and best practices in advancing the implementation of Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security. UN Women serves as the secretariat of the Network, which is currently composed of over 80 members.